Pacific Crossing: California Gold, Chinese Migration and the Making of Hong Kong. Elizabeth Sinn, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2014. xviii + 454pp. ISBN 9789888139712.

In this meticulously researched and engaging study, Elizabeth Sinn places Hong Kong at the centre of the Chinese movements to and from the Californian coast during the Gold Rush. What emerges is not only a unique approach to migration studies, but also a new perspective on the history of Hong Kong and its role in shaping the transpacific world during the second half of the nineteenth century. Sinn proposes the concept of an "in-between place" as a new paradigm in migration studies, which has traditionally focused on sending and receiving locations but has neglected the places of transience. By understanding Hong Kong as this in-between place of transit, Chinese migration gains new significance and complicates the usual story of a lone sojourner.

Based on the concept of Hong Kong as an "in-between place," each chapter of the monograph focuses on the movement of goods, people or business through Hong Kong to the gold fields. It begins by establishing Hong Kong as a colony, ready and waiting in the late 1840s for the right opportunity to explode from a colonial backwater into a bustling commercial centre. Despite initially being a rather disappointing colony, a steady influx of British professionals and armed services encouraged the growth of supporting services and industries in Hong Kong. This and its geographical advantages developed the colony into an integral shipping hub in the Atlantic world. There were also strong existing American mercantile ties in Hong Kong, so when the news broke of gold in California, it was Hong Kong's "call to action" (41).

With an understanding of this context, the second chapter assesses the impact of the Gold Rush in transforming Hong Kong into a leading emigration port. Sinn makes an important differentiation between the "coolies" being shipped predominantly from Macau to Cuba, Demarera and Peru, and those who responded to the call of gold, and who were distinct because they were Cantonese and their migration was largely voluntary. These Cantonese emigrants were described by Governor Sir John Bowring as "a superior class" (51) who had enough capital to afford comfortable passage for themselves and their luggage. In Hong Kong, coerced migration was illegal and the existence of British law was utilised by Chinese community leaders to protect the rights of migrants. The preference for Hong Kong, as the point of departure and return, for this new type of migrant was consolidated with the development of community networks and services.

The third chapter looks at the impact on and growth of the shipping trade concerning the development of Hong Kong until the late nineteenth century. The history of shipping, as Sinn mentions, is largely missing in both the history of Hong Kong – despite being integral to its development – and the history of Asian migration to the New World. Sinn draws out the complicated networks and densities of people involved in the passenger trade flowing between Hong Kong and San Francisco, who also suffered from the effects of the Exclusion Act. In doing so, she extends the idea of an "in-between place" to San Francisco, and locates both cities as hubs for transpacific exchanges.

The significance of the Californian Gold Rush for migration has been studied, but the impact it had on the movement of goods has not been explored. Sinn shows in the fourth chapter how merchants, at first primarily European and American but later dominated by the Chinese, were able to create and set up these transpacific markets to support the emerging needs and

desires of the overseas Chinese communities. One particular market was for opium, the focus of the fifth chapter. It was not just the habit for this drug that was transported, but a brand consciousness and the belief that Hong Kong-prepared opium was the best. As a result of this market desire, the colony remained the main supplier of prepared opium in the late nineteenth century. Bones, as discussed in the seventh chapter, were also frequently shipped, although the passage was always returning to Hong Kong for further distribution and burial in ancestral villages. Migrants were able to organise their return journey back to their villages in the event of their deaths, which provided emotional comfort for many. This was only possible through the community connections and logistics centred in Hong Kong and San Francisco. Although the Gold Rush brought temporary workers across the seas, the networks such traffic established created long-lasting commercial ventures, covering even the event of death.

There was also a large market for Chinese women in America. It is well understood that Chinese migration was a predominantly male affair, while the emigration of Chinese women (the focus of the sixth chapter) has been much less studied. The political, social, and cultural context of Hong Kong provided greater movement for women, both free and coerced. But their movement to San Francisco from Hong Kong and the growth of "Chinese Houses of Ill Fame" was quickly seen as indicative of Chinese moral deficiencies, fuelling American anti-Chinese sentiments. Sinn explains that although the Chinese elites were able to secure protection of their cultural practices with regard to women in Hong Kong, this set about motions that led to the American Chinese Exclusion Acts of the 1880s.

Throughout this book, it is clear that one of the key factors in facilitating this new transpacific world was the Chinese merchants and elites. Sinn continues a dominant theme from her previous works, highlighting the adaptive and influential nature of the Chinese in Hong Kong in carving out formal and informal communities and commercial avenues to promote their own, albeit patriarchal, interests. Hong Kong's "in-between" existence permitted native entrepreneurship. Other than the Chinese, Sinn explores how the Tankas, traditional boat-dwellers, were able to negotiate social mobility and access to land that had been denied them by the Qing Empire. Their marginal existence between British and Chinese society allowed them to facilitate the development of Hong Kong's maritime world, but on their own terms.

This is a truly illuminating and readable book, in which Sinn successfully connects Hong Kong to Chinese migration and the transpacific world. Most importantly, she highlights the importance of those places of transit, and the idea of the "in-between place" will, without a doubt, open up a variety of new avenues for the study of migration, both in historical and present-day contexts.

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